

Date: May 11, 2001

DSL-BQA-01-022

To: Nurse Aide Training Programs
Nursing Homes

NATP 10
NH 13

From: Donna Cochems, Chief
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From: La Vern Woodford, Chief
Resident Care Review Section

Via: Susan Schroeder, Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

Cross Reference: BQA Memo 00-066

Single Task Worker Plan

In July 2000, the Health Care Finance Administration (HCFA) directed the Department of Health and Family Services to submit a plan by January 1, 2001, describing how the Department would comply with HCFA's interpretation of the Social Security Act, relevant to the use of single task workers. The HCFA interpretation prohibits the use of single task workers in federally-certified nursing homes who have not successfully completed a nurse aide training and competency evaluation test.

The Department plan was submitted in late December 2000. On January 23, 2001, the Department was informed that HCFA had approved the plan, which provides one year for the phase-out of single task workers. **Any employee who has not successfully completed a nurse aide training and competency evaluation test will no longer be allowed to provide direct nursing related services in a nursing home after January 23, 2002.**

During CY2001, the Department will organize a multi-disciplinary work team charged with developing and implementing strategies to assist nursing homes with staff recruitment and retention. The work team will develop mechanisms for encouraging single task workers to become nurse aides. Special training sessions will also be offered to volunteers and family members interested in feeding or transporting their relatives.

In addition to working closely with nursing homes and nurse aide training programs throughout this year, the Department plan includes requiring BQA survey staff to develop a process for ensuring all facility staff performing nursing-related services are nurse aides, licensed practical nurses or registered nurses. At the end of the year-long phase out period, any facility employing single task workers to perform any direct care nursing related service will be cited.

During this phase-out year, nursing homes that have already obtained approval from BQA may continue to utilize single task workers. As stated in BQA Memo 00-066, surveyors will check with their Regional Field Office Director (RFOD) to determine whether a facility has been approved for the use of single task workers. No new applications for single task workers will be accepted.

Facilities utilizing single task workers are urged to encourage these valuable employees to become trained as nurse aides. Many approved nurse aide training programs exist throughout the state. In addition, part of the Department's approved plan is to improve access to nurse aide training programs and to offer alternative training sites and times.

Single Task Employee Survey

During the upcoming year, as part of the phase-out agreement with HCFA, the Department will be gathering data to determine whether single task workers are becoming nurse aides. Attached, you will find a Single Task Worker Survey form. This survey form will be reissued to nursing homes at 3-month intervals during the phase-out period. **All Nursing Homes: Please return this survey form whether or not you use single task workers either currently or in the past by Thursday, May 31, 2001.**

Information Contacts

Contact the following for information regarding:

Approved nurse aide training programs in your area:	Wisconsin Nurse Aide Directory (608) 267-2374 e-mail: WI_Nurse_Aide_Directory@dhfs.state.wi.us
Questions about nurse aide training program requirements:	Cindy Geist, Nurse Consultant Caregiver Regulation Investigation Section (608) 267-0467
Questions about single task worker issues:	Donna Cochems, Chief Caregiver Regulation and Investigation Section (608) 266-5153

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Directory and Nurse Aide Training Program Web Site

The Department's web site for the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Directory and Nurse Aide Training Program contains the most current versions of relevant documents, such as forms, frequently asked questions, fact sheets, and BQA Memos. The web site address is:

www.dhfs.state.wi.us/caregiver/NATD/NATDintro.htm

Attachment